

## Take a Walk on The Wild Side at Busch Gardens Tampa (Part 3): An Orlando-Area Attraction Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

In this, the third part of this [series of articles](#) looking at Busch Gardens Tampa, we're about to head into the African continent, visiting their savannah, having already explored a number of different areas of the park, including Cheetah Hunt, Morocco, and Jungala.

Now, to me, this is the real reason that I love making our way over to Tampa to enjoy time at Busch Gardens. Sure, there's a wonderful savannah at Animal Kingdom, and a couple of fascinating walk-through exhibits (Pangani Forest and Maharajah Jungle Trek), but nowhere there can you really just stand in the park, and admire the savannah in front of you, with animals roaming where they please. You can at Busch Gardens, and there are also two other ways to get a better view of the activity there.

□ The first is the Skyride, which I covered in the last installment in this series, but the second is a much calmer way of getting around, and one that everyone can enjoy. The Serengeti Railway allows you to take a slow tour of much of the park, giving you a very welcome opportunity to take the weight off your feet for a while. There are three stations, one in Congo, where we boarded, the next in Stanleyville, and the final one in Nairobi.

□ I'll be blunt here. While the railway takes you through the vast majority of the park, for the bulk of the tour, it isn't scenic, with occasional glimpses of the park's various terrifying coasters. However, it all changes in between Nairobi and the Congo stations, and that makes the whole ride very worthwhile. The train circles the Serengeti Plain, and if you want the best of the savannah, you'll need to ensure that when it arrives on Nairobi, you're on the left hand side, as then you'll have a perfect view from there until the Congo train station. Amongst the animals we spotted were zebra, giraffes, and rhinos.

The other way you can see the savannah is by taking a self-guided walking tour through the Edge of Africa, but it also offers so much more. This really is a part of the park where you want to take your time, and explore every nook and cranny, as you never know what's just around the corner. It's also a bit random, in that you can choose which path you want to explore, there isn't just one way to go, which I found quite fun! It's like being able to decide which adventure you want, and

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when.

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□As we made our way around, we found exhausted hyenas, asleep on the ground, a male lion, and next door some lionesses, who were also taking it easy. Head down another path, and you'll come across hippos in an underwater viewing area, with a crocodile, or it could have been an alligator (I have to confess without signs, I'm never that good at differentiating between the two, and I never want to get too close to them to check!)

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□There's also a section with the always cute meerkats in it, but on the day we visited, we were lucky enough to meet the temporary inhabitants of the enclosure next door, a pair of adorable cheetah cubs, who were gradually being acclimatised to life outside, with hordes of people staring at them. They were allowed to decide if they wanted to emerge from the box they arrived in, and luckily for us, they did. We spent probably a good 20 minutes or so admiring them, as let's face it, baby cheetahs aren't something you see every day in any zoo, safari or theme park.

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□Once you've finished getting up close and personal with the wildlife on the savannah, there are some other animal exhibits that are worth seeing. The fascinatingly named elephant interaction wall is located nearby in Nairobi, and if you want to see these magnificent creatures, it's the only place to encounter them. We did also visit the Animal Care Center opposite, but that was a disappointment, as the work of the team who care for the animals is apparently only conducted in the mornings, something we didn't realise before our visit. If you do head here early, you may luck out and see anything from X-rays to surgeries or treatments. Given that we've seen some fascinating work at Rafiki's Planet Watch over the years, I would have loved to have seen something similar here. Elsewhere, you can meet animals such as flamingos, lemurs, and sloths at Jambo Junction.

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□Right next door to Nairobi is the exceptionally colourful, and wonderfully named Pantopia. It's a pleasant experience to walk through it, given the riot of oranges, yellows, and reds that greets you here. The expansive Pantopia Theater is home to Opening Night Critters, the latest version of a long-running Busch Gardens favourite, which stars rescued domestic and exotic animals. There are more thrill rides here, including one of the park's newest, Falcon's Fury, which dropping you at 60 miles an hour face-first from 335 feet high. It was as much as we could do to watch it, it was that terrifying to us! From one of the one of the newest, the Scorpion coaster is now one of just a handful of its kind that remains. Despite its age, I still found the description of it scary enough, with 360 degree loops, and it reaches speeds of up to 50 miles

an hour!

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□ In the final installment of this series of articles, we'll look at the final areas of the park -- Stanleyville, the Sesame Street Safari of Fun, and Bird Gardens.

*About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)*

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